

TOWN OF KITTERY, MAINE
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
Council Chambers

APPROVED
January 9, 2014

Meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m.

Board Members Present: Tom Emerson, Karen Kalmar, Bob Melanson, Ann Grinnell, Mark Alesse, Deborah Driscoll Davis

Members absent: Susan Tuveson

Staff: Gerry Mylroie, Planner; Chris DiMatteo, Assistant Planner

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes:

Ms. Grinnell moved to approve the minutes of December 12, 2013 as corrected

Ms. Kalmar seconded

Motion carries with 5 in favor and 1 abstention (Melanson)

Public Comment:

Rachel Sparkowich, 22B Old Farm Road, representing Operation Blessing Limited Partnership, read a prepared statement (Attachment 1). Chairman Emerson stated the Board will be reviewing the right-of-way application from Operation Blessing at the next applicant Board meeting.

There was no further public comment.

ITEM 1 – Estes Bulk Propane Storage/U.S. Route 1 –Preliminary Plan Completeness Review.

Action: hold public hearing, discuss site walk and, grant or deny preliminary plan approval. Owner M&T Realty, Applicant Estes Oil & Propane Company, propose a 60,000 gallon bulk propane storage facility at their property south of 506 U.S. Route 1, Tax Map 67, Lot 4, Mixed Use, Residential Rural and Shoreland Overlay zones. Agent is Edward Brake, ATTAR Engineering.

The scheduled site walk did not take place (due to the weather) and will be re-scheduled.

Edward Brake, ATTAR Engineering introduced Jody Ameden and re-summarized the proposal. He noted the DEP performed a site walk as part of the NRPA application. Ken Woods investigated the site and found no vernal pools.

Jody Ameden explained her role was to prepare the fire safety analysis, and distributed the reports to the Board. She met with Chief O'Brien in November to review the design. The system is designed with automatic and manual shutoffs; everything is crash protected and secured from vandalism. She could find no evidence regarding bullet penetration of these style tanks made of 5/8" thick, curved steel exterior walls.

Public Hearing opened and closed at 6:21 p.m. There was no public comment

Earldean Wells noted the Conservation Commission has submitted two letters to the Board, and questions whether the recent FEMA Floodplain maps will impact this property, and requested that CMA or a wetland specialist perform a vernal pool assessment. Mr. DiMatteo stated that CMA is not wetland scientists, but third party review could be requested by the Board. It is unclear if the wetlands have been re-certified by Michael Cuomo since the 1997 assessment, including vernal pool identification.

Ed Brake explained the draft FEMA mapping appears to be essentially the same. He is awaiting a response from FEMA as to whether the LOMR will be included in the mapping, or remain as is. Mr. Mylroie explained the LOMR would stand. Mr. DiMatteo explained the proposed FEMA mapping is still in the local review stage and final adoption, including any revisions, will not occur until 2015. He suggested the applicant confirm with FEMA the impact of these new plans on the existing LOMR.

Discussion followed regarding the existing vs. proposed flood maps. Mr. Melanson asked how far above the flood plain are the proposed tanks. Mr. Brake stated almost 20 feet based on the LOMR.

The proposal is the narrowest location to cross the wetland, and the amount of fill required will be approximately 2000 cubic yards. The installation of culverts will allow for animal crossing and water flow. Chief O'Brien stated he had no safety concerns with the project. Discussion followed regarding occasional gas plumes on Route 1 and Chief O'Brien explained there are propane tanks everywhere, but these large scale operations have few safety concerns because of the built-in safety precautions. He also explained a bullet into a propane tank will not cause an explosion without an accompanying fire. A hole would create a plume and alarms would go off, and the installation of an 8 inch water line will allow the fire department to adequately handle any leakage.

Ed Brake explained the sewer line will be installed under the proposed road, but it has yet to be determined whether it will be hooked up. The entire road is paved, with concrete saddles approximately three feet off the ground for the propane tanks. Discussion followed regarding provision of vegetation/tree buffering along Route 1 prior to potential development in the MU zone of the project, and timber harvesting.

Traffic: During peak periods, two delivery trucks per day and one semi supply truck once or twice per week.

Resource Protection Zone: This is a regulatory setback and should be ground confirmed. Applicant will survey and confirm.

In summary, the applicant needs to confirm with FEMA the status of the LOMR; re-verify the Resource Protection Zone; re-certify wetlands and vernal pools; wetland mitigation plan; review street tree code requirements.

Discussion followed regarding vernal pool certification and identification of pools off site. Documentation needs to be supplied demonstrating the methodology by which certification was determined. Discussion followed regarding a site walk. Ms. Driscoll stated frogs were heard.

Ms. Driscoll Davis moved to schedule a site walk for Estes Oil & Propane Company, at 506 U.S. Route 1, Tax Map 67, Lot 4, on Wednesday, January 22 at 10:30 a.m., and to continue preliminary plan review.

Ms. Grinnell seconded

Unanimous by all members present

ITEM 2 – Roylos Development - Land Division – 32 Haley Road

Action: hold public hearing, grant or deny plan approval. Owners, John and Beth Roylos request approval to divide their property (Map 47 Lot 18-4) located off Haley Road along Wilson Creek in the Residential Rural (R-RL) Zone, a portion of which is within the Shoreland Overlay Zone.

John Roylos, owner, stated he only received comments from the Conservation Commission prior to the meeting.

The Public Hearing opened and closed at 7:19 p.m. There was no public comment.

Mr. DiMatteo summarized the project to date, noting this is a lot-split and is before them because the prior approved plan required Board review for any changes. The proposed septic locations have been identified by Sweet Associates, and reserve septic locations have been identified off-site in a separate parcel, over an easement. This is allowed, and Mr. Roylos will have to record all necessary easements within 45 days or the approval becomes void. Additionally, the mitigation tied with this project will be required to be completed, and will be monitored by the Code Enforcement Officer. The owner is required to provide an escrow to cover the costs for the mitigation, as well as for a two-year inspection period by the landscape architect. Discussion followed regarding responsibility for the mitigation on Lot 1. Discussion followed regarding access to the reserve septic location via the ROW.

Earldean Wells asked about the verification of stump removal and cul-de-sac on the plan.

Note 11 on the proposed plan will be amended to state: "The paper cul-de-sac will not be built...".

Bob Melanson moved to read the Findings of Fact for approval of the Roylos property division at Map 47, Lot 18-4.

Ms. Grinnell seconded

WHEREAS: **Applicant** Beth and John Roylos, Owners, propose to divide their property located on Map 47 Lot 18-4, in the Residential - Rural (R-RL) Zoning District, a portion of which lies within the Shoreland Overlay Zone, parcel area is ± 9.6 acres with address of 32 Haley Road, thereby amending the 1985 *Plan of Lots Haley Road, Kittery Maine for Howard Mann* recorded At the York County Registry of Deeds, Book 144, Page 36.

Pursuant to the Plan Review meetings conducted by the Planning Board as duly noted; and pursuant to the Project Application, Plan and other documents.

NOW THEREFORE, based on the entire record before the Planning Board and pursuant to the applicable standards in the Land Use and Development Code, the Planning Board makes the following factual findings:

FINDINGS OF FACT

ITEMS 1-11 [by reference; items not read]

NOW THEREFORE the Kittery Planning Board adopts each of the foregoing Findings of Fact and based on these Findings determines the proposed development will have no significant detrimental impact, and the Kittery Planning Board hereby votes to grant approval of the above referenced property, contingent upon the following conditions.

Conditions of Approval:

1. The Applicant must revise the final land division plan to include the following plan note:
The purpose of this plan is to replace the *Land Division Plan prepared for John C. Roylos & Beth Nelson Roylos 32 Haley Road, Kittery Maine* with a revision date of 7/17/12, recorded at the YCRD, Bk362, Pg37, whereby substituting a sanitary force main with on-site subsurface waste water disposal systems.
2. The Applicant must prepare a Roadway Agreement that incorporates the proposed lot's access rights and maintenance requirements to the existing ROW that connects to Haley Road. Within 45 days after Planning Board approval a copy of the agreement must be submitted to the Town Planner for review and must be recorded at the YCRD within 90 days.
3. The Applicant must prepare an easement for the benefit of Lot 2 to furnish and maintain a septic system on a portion of Lot 1, as denoted on the Land Division Plan and to establish and maintain access to the waterfront. Within 45 days after Planning Board approval a copy of the access and utility easement must be submitted to the Town Planner for review and must be recorded at the YCRD within 90 days.
4. The Applicant shall remedy the cutting and removal in the Shoreland Zone of the property per the site restoration report recommendations by Terrance Parker, LA, dated July 20, 2011. Funds (estimated by Peer Review Engineer plus 3% to cover inflation) shall be deposited in escrow with the Town of Kittery in order to inspect restoration efforts and to insure the successful establishment of materials per report recommendations. Escrow to be established no later than 45 days after Planning Board approval. In the event that the approved plan is not executed and the escrow is not established the Applicant will be subject to action by the Code Enforcement Officer and associated fines related to the 2006 violation.
5. Applicant must execute and record at the YCRD the submitted Easement Deed between John T. & Martha R Shaw and Beth Nelson Roylos that allows the construction of a reserve wastewater disposal field on a portion of the Shaw's property (Map47 Lot 18-1-2) fronting Haley Road no later than 90 days after the Planning Board approval.
6. The Applicant, must pay in full all outstanding fees to the Town no later than 45 days after the Planning

Board approval.

7. The Applicant, prior to any earth moving or soil disturbance, must submit to the Town Planner one (1) mylar copy and two (2) paper copies of the recorded Plan, and any and all related state/federal permits or legal documents that may be required.
8. The Planning Board approval does not intend to change any conditions stated on the 1985 approved plan referenced in Finding #1 above.
9. The above conditions must be shown on the final plan. Any additional changes and modifications to the final plan must be approved by the Planning Board.
10. Existing Note 11 shall be amended to read: The paper cul-de-sac will not be built...”.

Vote of 6 in favor 0 against 0 abstaining

Board members agreed to review Item 5 next, out of sequence.

OLD BUSINESS

ITEM 3 – Town Code Amendment – Title 16.7.8 Land Not Suitable for Development.

Action: review amendment and schedule a public hearing. An amendment to the Town Code to address the applicability the *Soil Suitability Guide for Land Use Planning in the State of Maine* referenced in Title 16.7.8.1 Locations of Sewage, item 5, which pertains to soils related to septic sewage. The proposed amendment also includes changes to the net residential area calculations.

Ms. Kalmar noted that in Falmouth, net residential area is addressed: “to determine Net Residential Area, the following shall be subtracted from the parcel’s gross area:...”. This method leaves out the whole issue of suitability or non-suitability. Board members discussed items to be subtracted from the gross acreage and suggested amendments to be incorporated.

Jeff Clifford, Altus Engineering, it would be helpful if the Board could describe the process by which this amendment proceeds through the Planning Board and Council, and address the projects that are still pending before the Board and how this process impacts their review.

Chairman Emerson stated the Planning Board would review, hold a public hearing and recommend adoption by Council. Depending upon the period before Council, he feels this would be a minimum two-month process. Mr. Mylroie stated the Council will most likely have a workshop on this issue and this should be pre-scheduled, before formal submittal to Council. Mr. Melanson suggested the appropriate guidance to pending applicants is there will be no change before the spring. Discussion followed regarding the review process with or without Council. John Watts stated he does not believe it is fair to applicants to have to wait until this is resolved. Development has been accomplished in Town that has been environmentally conscious without following the existing ordinance. What has been working should still be able to work, and not penalize property owners. Discussion followed regarding the Watts subdivision submittal that was not accepted. Mr. DiMatteo explained the Suitability Guide indicated none of his soils were suitable for development. A possible approach could be to focus on drainage class now, instead of net residential acreage. Members did not want to submit two amendments on the same issue to Council. Following review of the proposed amendment, staff will incorporate suggestions of changes and accompanying definitions as needed, and resubmit to the Board for further review.

Mr. Watts suggested if there are means to build on ledge, an applicant should not be prevented from doing so, as long as septic can be accommodated adequately. Chairman Emerson cited the Comprehensive Plan directs development to sewered areas, and development should conform to the character of the community, which is changed when ledge is built upon. Mr. Watts disagreed.

ITEM 4 – Town Code Amendment – Title 16.7 Sewer System and Septic Disposal and 16.9.1.4 Soil Suitability. Action: review amendment and schedule a public hearing. Amendments to the Town Code to address soil suitability as it pertains to septic disposal systems and other development.
NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 5 – Landgarten/578 Haley Road Renovations – Shoreland Development Plan

Action: accept or deny plan application Owner and applicant Michael Landgarten is requesting approval of revised approved plans to expand an existing non-conforming building located at Tax Map 26, Lot 36, Kittery Point Village and Shoreland Overlay zones. Agent is Jesse Thompson, Kaplan Thompson Architects.

Jesse Thompson, agent, summarized the project and explained it is before the Board because it has been reduced in size since the previous Board approval.

Ms. Grinnell moved to grant approval to the 2013 plan for 578 Haley Road in the KPV and Shoreland Overlay zones.

Ms. Davis seconded

Following discussion, Ms. Grinnell amended her motion to include “the Board waives the requirement for a Public Hearing as a public hearing was held previously, and the plan is not any further nonconforming than the previously approved plan”.

Mr. Melanson seconded

Motion carried unanimously

WHEREAS: Owner and applicant Michael Landgarten is requesting approval of their plans to expand an existing non-conforming building located at 578 Haley Road, Tax Map 26, Lot 36, in the Kittery Point Village and Shoreland Overlay zones. Agent is Jesse Thompson, Kaplan Thompson Architects
Hereinafter the “Development”.

Pursuant to the Plan Review meetings conducted by the Planning Board as duly noted; and pursuant to the Project Application and Plan and other documents considered to be a part of the approval by the Planning Board in this finding consist of the following (Hereinafter the “Plan”).

1. Shoreland Overlay Zone Project Plan Review Application, dated 12/18/13
2. Site and Area Plans (A-0.0 and A-0.1) entitled Renovation Michael Landgarten and Sam Curren dated 12/18/2013
3. *Standard Boundary Survey & Existing Conditions Plan for 578 Haley Road...* prepared by Easterly survey dated 1/18/13 REV 4/8/13

NOW THEREFORE, based on the entire record before the Planning Board as and pursuant to the applicable standards in the Land Use and Development Code, the Planning Board makes the following factual findings:

FINDINGS OF FACT

I. Standards in the Shoreland Overlay Zone

Title 16.3 LAND USE ZONE REGULATIONS have been met.
The existing, total impervious area is 5,713 sf, or 5.4% of lot area (105,800 sf). The increase in total impervious area with the proposed project is 5,961 sf, or 5.6%. The proposed addition does not exceed 20% of the lot area.
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining

II. Standards for Non-Conforming Structures (within and outside the Shoreland Overlay Zone)

Title 16.7 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS have been met
16.7.3.1 Prohibitions and Allowances.

The proposed development is no closer than the existing structure to the protected resources (freshwater wetland to the north and the tidal Bartons Creek to the south).	
16.7.3.5.5 Nonconforming Structure Repair and/or Expansion	
The proposed development and barn addition are within 100 feet of the freshwater wetland (to the north), though not any closer than the existing structure. The proposed development meets the standard to be <i>no more nonconforming than the existing condition</i> .	
16.7.3.6 Nonconforming Structures in Shoreland and Resource Protection Zones.	
Volume: Existing Total: 21,363 CU FT* Proposed Expansion 1,485 CF 7.0% (Allowance is 30%) * There were no previous expansions after 1/1/1989	Square Footage (Total Floor Area): Existing Total: 2,865 SF* Proposed Expansion: 306 SF 10.7% (Allowance is 30%) * There were no previous expansions after 1/1/1989
The development proposal does not include a full replacement.	
The development proposal does not include any expansion or replacement of the building's foundation.	
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining	

III. Procedures for Administering Permits For Shoreland Development Review

16.10.10.2 D. An Application will be approved or approved with conditions if the reviewing authority makes a positive finding based on the information presented. It must be demonstrated that the proposed use will:

1. maintain safe and healthful conditions;
The proposed development does not appear to have an adverse impact
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining
2. not result in water pollution, erosion or sedimentation to surface waters;
The proposed development does not appear to have an adverse impact. A Note on the final plan should include the Maine DEP's BMP's, including erosion control measures to be followed during site and building renovations.
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining
3. adequately provide for the disposal of all wastewater;
The proposed development does not appear to have an adverse impact. Property has recently been inspected and an adequate system is in place.
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining
4. not have an adverse impact on spawning grounds, fish, aquatic life, bird or other wildlife habitat;
The proposed development does not appear to have an adverse impact
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining
5. conserve shore cover and visual, as well as actual, points of access to inland and coastal waters;
The proposed development does not appear to have an adverse impact
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining
6. protect archaeological and historic resources;
The proposed development does not appear to have an adverse impact
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining
7. not adversely affect existing commercial fishing or maritime activities in a commercial fisheries/

<i>maritime activities district;</i>
Not applicable.
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining
8. <i>avoid problems associated with floodplain development and use</i>
The proposed development does not appear to have an adverse impact
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining
9. <i>is in conformance with the provisions of this Code;</i>
The proposed development appears to be in conformance to the Town Code, see sections I and II above.
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining
10. <i>recorded with the York County Registry of Deeds.</i>
After Final plan is signed the Applicant must record the plan at the York County Registry of Deeds within 90days of the approval.
Vote: <u>6</u> in favor <u>0</u> against <u>0</u> abstaining

NOW THEREFORE the Kittery Town Planning Board adopts each of the foregoing Findings of Fact and based on these Findings determines the proposed development will have no significant detrimental impact, contingent upon the following condition(s):

Conditions of Approval: (All conditions must be included on the final plan prior to signature by the Planning Board Chairman)

1. Final Plan must include notes that reflect adherence to the Maine DEP *Best Management Practices* for all work associated with site and building renovations to ensure adequate erosion control and slope stabilization.
2. Any additional changes and modifications to the final plan must be approved by the Planning Board.

Move to accept the above *Findings of Fact* as read, *Application Waivers* and *Conditions of Approval* if any, and approve the proposed *Development* in the Shoreland Overlay Zone on property located at 578 Haley Road, Tax Map 26, Lot 36 and authorize the Planning Board Chairman to sign the Final Plan and Findings of Fact after said conditions have been met.

Vote: 6 in favor 0 against 0 abstaining

Break

ITEM 6 – Board Member Items / Discussion

A. Election of Officers

Ms. Kalmar nominated Tom Emerson as Chairman

Ms. Grinnell seconded

Motion carried unanimously by all members present

Mr. Melanson nominated Susan Tuveson as Vice Chairman

Ms. Grinnell seconded

Motion carried with 5 in favor; 1 opposed (Alesse); 0 abstentions

Ms. Grinnell nominated Debbie Driscoll Davis as Secretary

Mr. Melanson seconded

Motion carried with 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstention (Driscoll Davis)

Board Representative to the other Committees/Boards:

Ann Grinnell nominated Debbie Driscoll Davis as representative to the Shore and Harbor Plan committee

Bob Melanson seconded

Motion carried unanimously by all members present

Ms. Grinnell nominated Bob Melanson as representative to the Kittery Port Authority for another year, and requested a monthly KPA update with Board packets

Mr. Alesse Seconded

Motion carried with 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstention (Melanson)

- Bike / Pedestrian Plan Committee – Chairman Emerson asked to participate with this committee. Board members concurred.
 - Destination Marketing – Board members need to keep a clear separation between economic development and planning. Discussion followed regarding parking in the Foreside and the role of planning in this process. A Parking subcommittee of the Board was formed to study parking in the Foreside, to include Susan Tuveson, Debbie Driscoll Davis, and Ann Grinnell. Mr. Mylroie explained there is a Foreside Committee in existence. Board members agreed the subcommittee will be dealing with areas other than just the Foreside.
- B. Set Time for Board Retreat/Workshop (January 24 – 9:00-Noon) Board members only; no staff. Ms. Tuveson was to prepare the materials from the MMA workshop as handouts.
- C. Board By-Laws (Bring By-Laws from 11/14/13 meeting). Ms. Tuveson will bring the draft to the January 23 Board meeting.
- D. Other: Board members concurred they would like to continue with the monthly meeting set-up for applications and administrative issues.

ITEM 7 –Town Planner Items:

- A. Quality Improvement Overlay Zone;
- B. Frisbee Holdings LLC: KPA application for proposed float extension. Mr. Melanson reported that the Frisbee Holdings LLC plan was not accepted by the KPA, but extended for further review.
- C. When Pigs Fly minor site plan amendment. No plan change for building footprint or parking requirements. Approved by the CEO and Planner.
- D. Other

Ms. Wells asked to be included in the Soil Suitability Subcommittee meetings when held. Chairman Emerson stated when the subcommittee is set up, they will let her know.

Chairman Emerson: Reserve parcels and timber harvesting need to be added to the punch list.

Ms. Grinnell moved to adjourn

Mr. Melanson seconded

Motion carried by all members present

The Kittery Planning Board meeting of January 9, 2014 adjourned at 9:45 p.m.
Submitted by Jan Fisk, Recorder, January 14, 2014

ATTACHMENT 1

Enclosure (1)

Thursday Night 1/9/2014 - Rachel Sparkowich (O.B. Ltd. P.) KPB Narrative

1 message

(1 Page)

My name is Rachel Sparkowich, 22B Old Farm Road, Kittery Maine.

I am speaking in behalf of Operation Blessing Ltd. Partnership's 11/21/2013 Application submitted to the Kittery Planning Dept. requesting approval of a 50 ft.R.O.W., so we can sell the back 43 Acres of Lot 61-8 to a willing buyer, that has been waiting in the wings for a year and a half.

I really felt a need to share some things that have been on my heart for quite some time.

We've been very saddened by the many attacks and false accusations that have come against us, again and again. - How long are we supposed to allow this kind of abuse to go on?

Neighbors of ours on Highpointe Circle, have not allowed my husband to clarify the many issues that they have shared with other neighbors, that are totally false.

In the past, one of the neighbors repeatedly threatened to ruin my husband. First, he used inappropriate language and put his fist to my husband's face.

He told my husband that, everyone on the street hated us, which we don't believe for a minute. Then this neighbor said, he'd do everything to drive us out of Town. And we believe he's also trying to break us financially, through the process.

If that wasn't enough, this neighbor tried to just about run over my husband, with his car. - My husband moved backwards very quickly, and the neighbor just missed crushing his feet by the car. - How bad is that? - My husband was just obeying the Planning Board. - The Board had required 3 road signs to be installed, reading "PRIVATE WAY - NOT A THRU STREET".

When my husband came home and shared what had happened, I just started crying. - I thought, "What next - Is this neighbor going to take a gun and shoot my husband?" - It shook me up pretty bad. I didn't sleep too good that night.

In 1978, I felt led to help hurting families, from my home. - I helped people for more than 3 years, out of our Portsmouth home. That's ~~where~~ where we lived, at the time. Then this Helps Ministry, now called Operation Blessing, (O.B.) grew and grew. Eventually, the O.B. Center was built, with construction finishing in 1988. It's located next to the Crossroads Transitional Shelter, south of Portsmouth, on Route 1. - Thousands of families in crisis have been helped with food, furniture, clothing, appliances, household items, gas and automobiles at times.

I share this with you, just to make a point! - Does this sound like we're people that would lie and break the laws? - Just the opposite. We are very honest people, always ready to give a helping hand, when somebody is hurting. It's been over 30 years of giving of ourselves, to help others. - Why? - Because we care and love people.

In closing, I want to share something, and this is not to brag about ourselves but to bring a point across, of what type of people we are. - In 1988, my husband and I were chosen to be "Man and Woman of the Year" by Portsmouth Magazine.

In 1999 we were the recipients of "The Americas Award" receiving the "Nobel Prize for Goodness", with a 3 day, all expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. - I was asked to share about how Operation Blessing started, and this actually took place on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. Then we were honored to dine with the reigning Miss America, in the Lincoln Room of the Capitol.

Now, I ask you to answer this question, in your own mind. Do we seem like criminals? - Because, we feel like we've been treated so unfairly, for so many years. I believe this has to come to an end. We've waited 10 years to build a home - do we have to wait another 10 years? - It might be too late, we might be in the ground by then.

Thank you for allowing me to share my heart with you.

Rachel Sparkowich